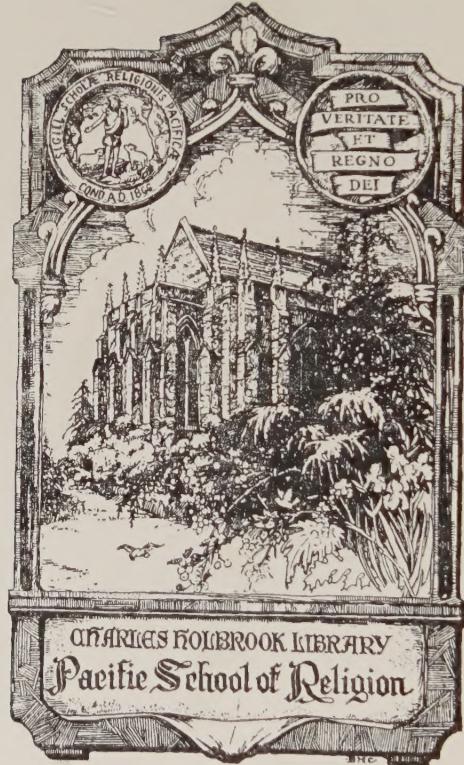


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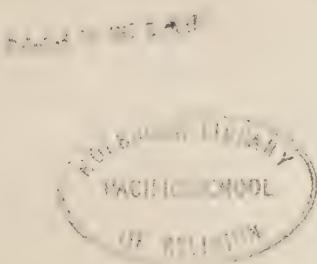
JUDITH ADORNS HERSELF

Bible, O.T., Apocrypha, Judith, English, 1928.

THE BOOK OF JUDITH

REPRINTED FROM THE REVISED VERSION OF
THE APOCRYPHA WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY DR. MONTAGUE R. JAMES, F.S.A., F.B.A.,
AND COLOUR-PLATES AFTER DRAWINGS BY
W. RUSSELL FLINT, A.R.A., R.W.S.

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INTRODUCTION

Familiar as are the pictures in many galleries which represent Judith carrying the head of Holofernes, or cutting it off, it is certain that the Book of which her exploit is the leading incident is seldom read. Those who do read it are probably surprised to find that Judith is not so much as mentioned until the beginning of the eighth chapter, almost halfway through the Book. It must be confessed that before she appears there is not much in the story to rivet the attention. Yet there is some skill in the construction. We begin with an international war of wide extent, and the sphere of it is gradually narrowed down till we concentrate on Palestine, then on Judaea, lastly on Bethulia; and there the scene is set for the appearance of the heroine. Gradually, too, the religious interest emerges out of the details of the campaign, and asserts itself as one of the two principal motives of the Book. The other is Jewish patriotism and pride of race. But we will look a little more closely into the course of the story.

We begin with Nebuchadnezzar, who reigns in Nineveh (which Nebuchadnezzar did not, but in Babylon), and makes war on Arphaxad, who reigns in Ecbatana and fortifies it: the fortifications are described in some detail. Arphaxad is no name of a Median king: we find it among the dim pedigrees in Genesis, where it is given to a son of Shem. We also read in Ptolemy, the geographer, of a district of Assyria called Arrapachitis, and we learn that the first of Median kings was Arbaces. Reminiscences of such names may have suggested Arphaxad. As to Ecbatana, it was Deioces, Herodotus says, who founded it and made its great walls. Nebuchadnezzar, then, in preparation for his campaign against Arphaxad, gathers a host of the neighbouring lands and then summons all manner of peoples, from Persia to the borders of Ethiopia, to aid him. But they entirely refuse, why, we are not told. "They were not

INTRODUCTION

afraid of him." So, registering a vow to be avenged on them later, he sets forth with those forces which had obeyed his call, marches against Arphaxad and defeats him, and kills him, returning in triumph to Nineveh. Next year comes the turn of the rebellious nations. The great General Holofernes (Orophernes is a historical name, a title of the Princes of Cappadocia, reminding one of the Persian Satrap-names Tissaphernes and Intaphernes),* is commissioned to lay waste all the territory of the disobedient, and sets forth accordingly, with a mighty host. His route is unintelligible, and the names of the places and tribes which he visits are, in many cases, either corrupt or fictitious. But his progress is unchecked and he gets as far as the Syrian and Philistine coast, and Philistia sends ambassadors and submits. Their submission is accepted, and only their gods are destroyed, for none is to be worshipped but Nebuchadnezzar. Holofernes now rests for a month at Scythopolis. The Jews will be the next victims. But the Jews, newly returned from captivity, with a newly-restored temple and priesthood and worship, resolve, under the direction of the high-priest Joakim, to resist, and occupy the hills and passes, and earnest are their prayers to God for protection : prayers which, our writer hints, were destined to be effectually answered. The surprise of Holofernes at the boldness of this puny nation is great. He calls a council of the chiefs of the neighbourhood, and asks who these people are, who, "more than all that dwell in the west," have dared to defy him. The answer comes from Achior, the chief of the Ammonite contingent, who gives Holofernes a brief résumé of the history of the Jewish people, and lays stress on the fact that their God has been their protector throughout, that they are now reconciled to Him, and that unless they sin against

*Bagoas is a genuine Persian name and, like Orophernes, was borne by a general of Artaxerxes Ochus, when he made an expedition against Phoenicia and Egypt, in 350 B.C., a fact which may have furnished some ideas to our writer.

INTRODUCTION

Him afresh, it will be useless to think of subduing them. Achior's speech rouses general disagreement, which is voiced by Holofernes, who decides that Achior shall be delivered to the children of Israel, and shall share in their destruction. Accordingly he is bound and cast down at the foot of the hill on which stands the town of Bethulia—a place never yet identified as real, but destined to be the centre of interest for the remainder of the story. The men of Bethulia sally forth, bring Achior into the city, and present him to the elders, in particular to the chief of them, Ozias. He tells them all that has passed in the camp of Holofernes, and though dismayed at the terrible threats of the invader, they comfort and praise Achior and give him kindly entertainment. Ultimately, after the triumph of Judith, he becomes a proselyte. Next day Holofernes reconnoitres the site and lays siege to the town, and his first and very effective step is to seize the water supply. For thirty-four days he remains encamped, and in that time the supplies of water in Bethulia sink very low, and the people fall into despair, and demand of Ozias that he shall surrender. This he undertakes to do if, after five days, there is no change in the situation.

We have now reached the end of the seventh chapter of the Book. Judith, the young, beautiful, virtuous and wealthy widow of Manasses, now comes upon the scene, and at this point I may fairly leave the reader to follow the story for himself, through her noble rebuke of Ozias for trying to force the hand of God, her prayer, her successful stratagem, her triumphant return, and her hymn of praise, to the happy ending.

That this is no true history has long been recognised. The Book is a patriotic romance, inculcating faithfulness to the God of Israel, and confidence in His power to help in time of need. I have noticed in passing some of the disagreements

INTRODUCTION

with true history which occur in it. Though it makes use of real names, they are out of place, the assemblage of characters cannot be fitted together, nor can room for the episode be found where the author would like to place it, in the years immediately succeeding the return from the captivity. Some consciousness of real events, however, may underlie the fiction. There was a time when the Jews had to undergo oppression and violence from a foreign foe, and one, moreover, who was bent on stamping out their religion ; I mean the days of Antiochus Epiphanes (d. 164 B.C.), and of the Maccabean Wars. It is to that period that perhaps a majority of scholars now assign the writing of the Book of Judith. Others would agree that Antiochus Epiphanes and his lieutenant, Nicanor, are represented by Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes, but suggest that some generations elapsed before the story was put down in writing. This would bring it to the first century before Christ at latest. It is not doubted that it was written in Hebrew, but the Hebrew original is lost, and we depend on the Greek version as our oldest and best authority. There are other versions, but they are not independent of the Greek. St. Jerome, who only spent, he says, a single day on this Book, used a Chaldee or Aramaic form of it, which did not, apparently, give so full a text as the Greek, and, as a consequence, the Vulgate omits almost one fifth of the Book. There is more than one résumé of the story in Hebrew, but nothing of early date. Josephus, who might have been expected to notice the history, has nothing to say of it ; it cannot have appealed to him as historic. In fact, the first mention of Judith is found in the work of a Christian writer near the end of the first century, namely Clement of Rome, who, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, speaks of her as one of many women, who, in the strength of the grace of God, have done valiant deeds. His words remind us of the catalogue of the

INTRODUCTION

heroes of faith in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The writer of that may very well have had her in mind as one of those who "turned to flight the armies of the aliens," but he does not name her, any more than he names the Maccabaean martyrs, to whom he certainly alludes. Both he and Clement would have found the book of Judith included in the Greek Bible of their time.

She has then an established position as a biblical heroine at the end of the first century, and it is unnecessary to trace her further down the ages.

A word or two, however, about the treatment of her story in various fields of art, will not be out of place in an edition like the present. I find notice of pictures taken from the Book, in the poems of St. Paulinus of Nola, late in the fourth century. He tells us much about the decoration of the basilica, which he built at Nola, in honour of St. Felix. In a chapel, attached to the porticus of it, the story of Judith was represented in fresco or mosaic, along with those of Tobit, Job and Esther. Among the seventh-century frescoes of S. Maria Antiqua at Rome is the return of Judith with the head of Holofernes. When we come to the age of large illustrated Bibles, we sometimes find a page of scenes devoted to her : it is so in the ninth-century Bible of St. Paul's without the walls of Rome, and in the twelfth-century Winchester Bible. There is a similar page in an eleventh-century Greek Bible in the Vatican, and others in the early Catalan Bibles of Ripoll (at Rome), and Rosas (at Paris).

I have not often met with her in the sculptured decoration of great churches ; in fact, I do not know that I can cite more than one occurrence, in the voussoires of the westernmost of the three portals of the north porch at Chartres. Donatello's fine bronze group in the Loggia dei Lanzi at Florence may be remembered. In glass, the Sainte Chapelle at Paris

INTRODUCTION

(c. 1248), has a portion of one of its large windows to show. And the great Painted Chamber at Westminster, in which all the warlike stories of the Bible were portrayed on the walls in Henry III's time, assuredly did not neglect Judith, though no fragment concerning her is among our records of the lost paintings. Those who sought for types in the Old Testament of events in the New, had recourse to this Book. In the twelfth—or thirteenth—century windows at Canterbury were types of those who excused themselves from coming to the Marriage Supper. One of these was taken from Judith; some nations followed King Nebuchadnezzar, some turned from him. In the later *Mirror of Human Salvation*, Achior, bound and derided by the men of Holofernes, is a type of Christ mocked; and Judith slaying Holofernes stands for the Virgin's triumph over Satan. After the mediaeval period, of course, this scene of Judith and Holofernes is a very popular subject for easel pictures, and many of the late Italian masters, who were the delight of our great-grandparents, and may have their turn again, devoted thereto canvasses of formidable dimensions, and great technical skill. We incline to pass them by, and find pleasure in the Botticelli rendering at Florence in the Uffizi; and in the Giorgione, at the Hermitage; or in the drawings by Mantegna at Florence and Dublin, or the Tintoret in the Prado at Madrid.

I confess I do not know what poets have written a "Judith," save the anonymous Anglo-Saxon, whose fragmentary work exists in a single MS., and is accounted one of the very best of the old English poems. The remaining cantos (x.-xii.) preserve the complete episode of the banquet of Holofernes, his death, the return of Judith, the defeat of the Assyrians, and Judith's song of praise. Some think that it was composed in honour of the great lady Aethelflaed of Mercia, who did valiantly against the Danes. If so, the date

INTRODUCTION

of composition would be about the year 918. It cannot be very much later.

It is somewhat of a disappointment that Handel did not write an oratorio of Judith. He or his librettists did not shun the Apocrypha, witness "Susanna," "Alexander Balus," and "Judas Maccabaeus." But perhaps, having dealt with Deborah and Jael, the prototype of Judith, he felt that that theme was exhausted. However, we have in Sir Hubert Parry's "Judith" some very splendid moments, notably, the return of Judith to Bethulia, and her final song of praise. Part of that song is also very beautifully set by Henry Smart, in his fine anthem, "Sing to the Lord."

A last word on the names. Judith means no more than Jewess, and is thus well suited to a national heroine. As a baptismal name it has had more of a vogue than Jael, but less than Deborah or Esther. A rather famous (one might say notorious) daughter of Charlemagne bore it, and so did some other noble ladies in succeeding generations. But it is not greatly favoured. Perhaps its associations of war and bloodshed are deterrent. Perhaps some unpleasant characters in fiction, such as Judith Malmayns in "Old St. Paul's," have given it an evil savour.

Of the other prominent names, that of Holofernes has been borrowed by Shakespeare in "Love's Labour Lost," for a character of very different type from the original. Ozias has had its turn, witness Ozias Humphreys the painter.

In fine, the tale of Judith is one which deserves to live, and I welcome any excuse for trying to commend it to the admiration and reverence of a fresh circle of readers.

MONTAGUE R. JAMES.

JUDITH & CHAPTER I

IN THE TWELFTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF Nebuchadnezzar, who reigned over the Assyrians in Nineveh, the great city ; in the days of Arphaxad, who reigned over the Medes in Ecbatana, and built at Ecbatana and round about it walls of hewn stones three cubits broad and six cubits long, and made the height of the wall seventy cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits ; and set the towers thereof at the gates thereof, a hundred cubits high, and the breadth thereof in the foundation threescore cubits ; and made the gates thereof, even gates that were raised to the height of seventy cubits, and the breadth of them forty cubits, for the going forth of his mighty hosts, and the setting in array of his footmen : even in those days king Nebuchadnezzar made war with king Arphaxad in the great plain : this plain is in the borders of Ragau. And there came to meet him all that dwelt in the hill country, and all that dwelt by Euphrates, and Tigris, and Hydaspes, and in the plain of Arioch the king of the Elymæans ; and many nations of the sons of Chelod assembled themselves to the battle.

And Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians sent unto all that dwelt in Persia, and to all that dwelt westward, to those that dwelt in Cilicia and Damascus and Libanus and Antilibanus, and to all that dwelt over against the sea coast, and to those among the nations that were of Carmel and Gilead, and to the higher Galilee and the great plain of Esdraelon, and to all that were in Samaria and the cities thereof, and beyond Jordan unto Jerusalem, and Betane, and Chellus, and Kadesh, and the river of Egypt, and Tahpanhes, and Rameses, and all the land of Goshen, until thou comest above Tanis and Memphis, and to all that dwelt in

Egypt, until thou comest to the borders of Ethiopia. And all they that dwelt in all the land made light of the commandment of Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians, and went not with him to the war ; for they were not afraid of him, but he was before them as one man ; and they turned away his messengers from their presence without effect, and with disgrace.

And Nebuchadnezzar was exceeding wroth with all this land, and he sware by his throne and kingdom, that he would surely be avenged upon all the coasts of Cilicia and Damascus and Syria, that he would slay with his sword all the inhabitants of the land of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and all Judæa, and all that were in Egypt, until thou comest to the borders of the two seas. And he set the battle in array with his host against king Arphaxad in the seventeenth year ; and he prevailed in his battle, and turned to flight all the host of Arphaxad, and all his horse, and all his chariots ; and he became master of his cities, and he came even unto Ecbatana, and took the towers, and spoiled the streets thereof, and turned the beauty thereof into shame. And he took Arphaxad in the mountains of Ragau, and smote him through with his darts, and destroyed him utterly, unto this day. And he returned with them to Nineveh, he and all his company of sundry nations, an exceeding great multitude of men of war, and there he took his ease and banqueted, he and his host, a hundred and twenty days.

JUDITH & CHAPTER II

AND IN THE EIGHTEENTH YEAR, THE TWO and twentieth day of the first month, there was talk in the house of Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians, that he should be avenged on all the land, even as he spake. And he called together all his servants, and all his great men, and communicated with them his secret counsel, and concluded the afflicting of all the land out of his own mouth. And they decreed to destroy all flesh which followed not the word of his mouth. And it came to pass, when he had ended his counsel, Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians called Holofernes the chief captain of his host, which was next after himself, and said unto him,

Thus saith the great king, the lord of all the earth, Behold, thou shalt go forth from my presence, and take with thee men that trust in their strength, unto a hundred and twenty thousand footmen ; and the number of horses with their riders twelve thousand : and thou shalt go forth against all the west country, because they disobeyed the commandment of my mouth. And thou shalt declare unto them, that they prepare earth and water ; because I will go forth in my wrath against them, and will cover the whole face of the earth with the feet of my host, and I will give them for a spoil unto them : and their slain shall fill their valleys and brooks, and the river shall be filled with their dead, till it overflow : and I will lead them captives to the utmost parts of all the earth. But thou shalt go forth, and take beforehand for me all their coasts ; and ¹if they shall yield themselves unto thee, then shalt thou reserve them for me till the day of their reproof. But as for them that are disobe-

1 Gr. *they shall yield . . . and thou shalt reserve.*

dient, thine eye shall not spare; but thou shalt give them up to be slain and to be spoiled in all thy land. For as I live, and by the power of my kingdom, I have spoken, and I will do this with my hand. And thou, moreover, shalt not transgress aught of the commandments of thy lord, but thou shalt surely accomplish them, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt not defer to do them.

And Holofernes went forth from the presence of his lord, and called all the governors and the captains and officers of the host of Asshur; and he numbered chosen men for the battle, as his lord had commanded him, unto a hundred and twenty thousand, and twelve thousand archers on horseback; and he ranged them, as a great multitude is ordered for the war. And he took camels and asses and mules for their baggage, an exceeding great multitude; and sheep and oxen and goats without number for their provision; and great store of victual for every man, and exceeding much gold and silver out of the king's house. And he went forth, he and all his host, on their journey, to go before king Nebuchadnezzar, and to cover all the face of the earth westward with their chariots and horsemen and chosen footmen. And a great company of sundry nations went forth with them like locusts, and like the sand of the earth: for they could not be numbered by reason of their multitude.

And they departed out of Nineveh three days' journey toward the plain of Bectileth, and encamped from Bectileth near the mountain which is at the left hand of the upper Cilicia. And he took all his host, his footmen and horsemen and chariots, and went away from thence into the hill country, and destroyed Put and Lud,

¶ JUDITH ¶

and spoiled all the children of Rasses, and the children of Ishmael, which were over against the wilderness to the south of the land of the Chellians. And he went over Euphrates, and went through Mesopotamia, and brake down all the high cities that were upon the river Arbonai, until thou comest to the sea. And he took possession of the borders of Cilicia, and slew all that resisted him, and came unto the borders of Japheth, which were toward the south, over against Arabia. And he compassed about all the children of Midian, and set on fire their tents, and spoiled their sheepcotes. And he went down into the plain of Damascus in the days of wheat harvest, and set on fire all their fields, and utterly destroyed their flocks, and herds, and spoiled their cities, and laid their plains waste, and smote all their young men with the edge of the sword.

And the fear and the dread of him fell upon them that dwelt on the sea coast, upon them that were in Sidon and Tyre, and them that dwelt in Sur and Ocina, and all that dwelt in Jemnaan ; and they that dwelt in Azotus and Ascalon feared him exceedingly.

AND THEY SENT UNTO HIM MESSENGERS with words of peace, saying, Behold, we the servants of Nebuchadnezzar the great king lie before thee: use us as it is pleasing in thy sight. Behold, our dwellings, and all our country, and all our fields of wheat, and our flocks and herds, and all the sheeptotes of our tents, lie before thy face: use them as it may please thee. Behold, even our cities and they that dwell in them are thy servants: come and deal with them as it is good in thine eyes. And the men came to Holofernes, and declared unto him according to these words.

And he came down toward the sea coast, he and his host, and set garrisons in the high cities, and took out of them chosen men for allies. And they received him, they and all the country round about them, with garlands and dances and timbrels. And he cast down all their borders, and cut down their groves: and it had been given unto him to destroy all the gods of the land, that all the nations should worship Nebuchadnezzar only, and that all their tongues and their tribes should call upon him as god. And he came towards Esdraelon nigh unto Dotæa, which is over against the great ridge of Judæa. And he encamped between Geba and Scythopolis, and he was there a whole month, that he might gather together all the baggage of his host.

JUDITH & CHAPTER IV

AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THAT dwelt in Judæa heard all that Holofernes the chief captain of Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians had done to the nations, and after what manner he had spoiled all their temples, and destroyed them utterly. And they were exceedingly afraid before him, and were troubled for Jerusalem, and for the temple of the Lord their God: because they were newly come up from the captivity, and all the people of Judæa were lately gathered together; and the vessels, and the altar, and the house, were sanctified after the profanation.

And they sent into every coast of Samaria, and to Konæ, and to Bethhoron, and Belmaim, and Jericho, and to Choba, and Æsora, and to the valley of Salem; and they possessed themselves beforehand of all the tops of the high mountains, and fortified the villages that were in them, and laid up victual for the provision of war: for their fields were newly reaped. And Joakim the high priest, which was in those days at Jerusalem, wrote to them that dwelt in Bethulia, and Betomesthaim, which is over against Esdraelon toward the plain that is nigh unto Dothaim, charging them to seize upon the ascents of the hill country; because by them was the entrance into Judæa, and it was easy to stop them from approaching, inasmuch as the approach was narrow, with space for two men at the most. And the children of Israel did as Joakim the high priest had commanded them, and the senate of all the people of Israel, which dwelt at Jerusalem.

And every man of Israel cried to God with great earnestness, and with great earnestness did they humble their souls. They, and their wives, and their babes, and

¶ JUDITH ¶

their cattle, and every sojourner and hireling and servant bought with their money, put sackcloth upon their loins. And every man and woman of Israel, and the little children, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, fell before the temple, and cast ashes upon their heads, and spread out their sackcloth before the Lord; and they put sackcloth about the altar: and they cried to the God of Israel earnestly with one consent, that he would not give their babes for a prey, and their wives for a spoil, and the cities of their inheritance to destruction, and the sanctuary to profanation and reproach, for the nations to rejoice at. And the Lord heard their voice, and looked upon their affliction: and the people continued fasting many days in all Judæa and Jerusalem before the sanctuary of the Lord Almighty. And Joakim the high priest, and all the priests that stood before the Lord, and they that ministered unto the Lord, had their loins girt about with sackcloth, and offered the continual burnt offering, and the vows and the free gifts of the people; and they had ashes on their mitres: and they cried unto the Lord with all their power, that he would look upon all the house of Israel for good.

AND IT WAS TOLD HOLOFERNES, THE chief captain of the host of Asshur, that the children of Israel had prepared for war, and had shut up the passages of the hill country, and had fortified all the tops of the high hills, and had laid impediments in the plains: and he was exceeding wroth, and he called all the princes of Moab, and the captains of Ammon, and all the governors of the sea coast, and he said unto them, Tell me now, ye sons of Canaan, who is this people, that dwelleth in the hill country, and what are the cities that they inhabit, and what is the multitude of their host, and wherein is their power and their strength, and what king is set over them, to be the leader of their army: and why have they turned their backs, that they should not come and meet me, more than all that dwell in the west.

And Achior, the leader of all the children of Ammon, said unto him,

Let my lord now hear a word from the mouth of thy servant, and I will tell thee the truth concerning this people, which dwelleth in this hill country, nigh unto the place where thou dwellest: and there shall no lie come out of the mouth of thy servant. This people are descended of the Chaldeans: and they sojourned heretofore in Mesopotamia, because they were not minded to follow the gods of their fathers, which were in the land of the Chaldeans. And they departed from the way of their parents, and worshipped the God of heaven, the God whom they knew: and they cast them out from the face of their gods, and they fled into Mesopotamia, and sojourned there many days. And their God commanded them to depart from the place where they sojourned, and to go into the land of

¶ JUDITH ¶

Canaan: and they dwelt there, and were increased with gold and silver, and with exceeding much cattle. And they went down into Egypt, for a famine covered all the land of Canaan: and there they sojourned, until they were grown up; and they became there a great multitude, so that one could not number their nation. And the king of Egypt rose up against them, and dealt subtilly with them,¹ and brought them low, making them to labour in brick, and made them slaves. And thy cried unto their God, and he smote all the land of Egypt with incurable plagues: and the Egyptians cast them out of their sight. And God dried up the Red sea before them, and brought them into the way of Sinai, and Kadesh-Barnea, and they cast out all that dwelt in the wilderness. And they dwelt in the land of the Amorites, and they destroyed by their strength all them of Heshbon, and passing over Jordan they possessed all the hill country. And they cast out before them the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Shechemite, and all the Gergashites, and they dwelt in that country many days. And whilst they sinned not before their God, they prospered, because God that hateth iniquity was with them. But when they departed from the way which he appointed them, they were destroyed in many battles very sore, and were led captives into a land that was not theirs, and the temple of their God was cast to the ground, and their cities were taken by their adversaries. And now they are returned to their God, and are come up from the dispersion where they were dispersed, and have possessed Jerusalem, where their sanctuary is, and are seated in the hill country: for it was desolate. And

¹ Some authorities read and he brought them low with clay and brick, &c.

¶ JUDITH ¶

now, my lord and master, if there is any error in this people, and they sin against their God, we will consider what this thing is wherein they stumble, and we will go up and overcome them. But if there is no lawlessness in their nation, let my lord now pass by, lest their Lord defend them, and their God be for them, and we shall be a reproach before all the earth.

And it came to pass, when Achior had finished speaking these words, all the people that compassed the tent and stood round about it murmured; and the great men of Holofernes, and all that dwelt by the sea side, and in Moab, spake that he should kill him. For, said they, we will not be afraid of the children of Israel: for, lo, it is a people that hath no power nor might to make the battle strong. Wherefore now we will go up, and they shall be a prey to be devoured of all thine army, lord Holofernes.

AND WHEN THE TUMULT OF THE MEN that were about the council was ceased, Holofernes the chief captain of the host of Asshur said unto Achior and to all the children of¹ Moab before all the people of the aliens,

And who art thou, Achior, and the hirelings of¹ Ephraim, that thou hast prophesied among us as to-day, and hast said, that we should not make war with the race of Israel, because their God will defend them? And who is God but Nebuchadnezzar? He shall send forth his might, and shall destroy them from the face of the earth, and their God shall not deliver them: but we his servants shall smite them as one man; and they shall not sustain the might of our horses. For with them we shall burn them up, and their mountains shall be drunken with their blood, and their plains shall be filled with their dead bodies, and their footsteps shall not stand before us, but they shall surely perish, saith king Nebuchadnezzar, lord of all the earth: for he said, The words that² I have spoken shall not be in vain. But thou, Achior, hireling of Ammon, which hast spoken these words in the day of thine iniquity, shalt see my face no more from this day, until I shall be avenged of the race of those that came out of Egypt. And then shall the sword of mine army, and the multitude of them that serve me, pass through thy sides, and thou shalt fall among their slain, when I shall return. And my servants shall bring thee back into the hill country, and shall set thee in one of the cities of the ascents: and thou shalt not perish, till thou be destroyed with them. And if thou hopest in thy heart that they shall not be taken, let not thy countenance

¹ Some authorities read Ammon. Compare ver. 5.

² Gr. he hath spoken.

fall. I have spoken it, and none of my words shall fall to the ground.

And Holofernes commanded his servants, that waited in his tent, to take Achior, and bring him back to Bethulia, and deliver him into the hands of the children of Israel. And his servants took him, and brought him out of the camp into the plain, and they removed from the midst of the plain country into the hill country, and came unto the fountains that were under Bethulia. And when the men of the city saw them on the top of the hill, they took up their weapons, and went out of the city against them to the top of the hill: and every man that used a sling kept them from coming up, and cast stones against them. And they gat them privily under the hill, and bound Achior, and cast him down, and left him at the foot of the hill, and went away unto their lord. But the children of Israel descended from their city, and came upon him, and loosed him, and led him away into Bethulia, and presented him to the rulers of their city; which were in those days Ozias the son of Micah, of the tribe of Simeon, and Chabris the son of Gothoniel, and Charmis the son of Melchiel. And they called together all the elders of the city; and all their young men ran together, and their women, to the assembly; and they set Achior in the midst of all their people. And Ozias asked him of that which had happened: and he answered and declared unto them the words of the council of Holofernes, and all the words that he had spoken in the midst of the princes of the children of Asshur, and all the great words that Holofernes had spoken against the house of Israel. And the people fell down and worshipped God, and cried, saying, O Lord

¶ JUDITH ¶

God of heaven, behold their arrogance, and pity the low estate of our race, and look upon the face of those that are sanctified unto thee this day. And they comforted Achior, and praised him exceedingly. And Ozias took him out of the assembly into his house, and made a feast to the elders; and they called on the God of Israel for help all that night.

BUT THE NEXT DAY HOLOFERNES GAVE command to all his army, and to all his people which were come to be his allies, that they should remove their camp toward Bethulia, and take beforehand the ascents of the hill country, and make war against the children of Israel. And every mighty man of them removed that day, and the host of their men of war was a hundred and seventy thousand footmen, and twelve thousand horsemen, beside the baggage, and the men that were afoot among them, an exceeding great multitude. And they encamped in the valley near unto Bethulia, by the fountain, and they spread themselves in breadth over Dothaim even to Belmaim, and in length from Bethulia unto Cyamon, which is over against Esdraelon.

But the children of Israel, when they saw the multitude of them, were troubled exceedingly, and said every one to his neighbour, Now shall these men lick up the face of all the earth; and neither the high mountains, nor the valleys, nor the hills, shall be able to bear their weight. And every man took up his weapons of war, and when they had kindled fires upon their towers, they remained and watched all that night.

But on the second day Holofernes led out all his horse in the sight of the children of Israel which were in Bethulia, and viewed the ascents to their city, and searched out the fountains of the waters, and seized upon them, and set garrisons of men of war over them, and himself departed to his people.

And there came unto him all the rulers of the children of Esau, and all the leaders of the people of Moab, and the captains of the sea coast, and said,

Let our lord now hear a word, that there be not an

overthrow in thy host. For this people of the children of Israel do not trust in their spears, but in the height of the mountains wherein they dwell, for it is not easy to come up to the tops of their mountains. And now, my lord, fight not against them as men fight who join battle, and there shall not so much as one man of thy people perish. Remain in thy camp, and keep safe every man of thy host, and let thy servants get possession of the fountain of water, which issueth forth of the foot of the mountain: because all the inhabitants of Bethulia have their water thence; and thirst shall kill them, and they shall give up their city: and we and our people will go up to the tops of the mountains that are near, and will encamp upon them, to watch that not one man go out of the city. And they shall be consumed with famine, they and their wives and their children, and before the sword come against them they shall be laid low in the streets where they dwell. And thou shalt render them an evil reward; because they rebelled, and met not thy face in peace.

And their words were pleasing in the sight of Holofernes and in the sight of all his servants; and he appointed to do as they had spoken. And the army of the children of Ammon removed, and with them five thousand of the children of Asshur, and they encamped in the valley, and seized upon the waters and the fountains of the waters of the children of Israel. And the children of Esau went up with the children of Ammon, and encamped in the hill country over against Dothaim: and they sent some of them toward the south, and toward the east, over against Ekrebel, which is near unto Chusi, that is upon the brook Mochmur; and the rest of the army of the Assyrians encamped in

the plain, and covered all the face of the land; and their tents and baggage were pitched upon it in a great crowd, and they were an exceeding great multitude. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord their God, for their spirit fainted; for all their enemies had compassed them round about, and there was no way to escape out from among them. And all the army of Asshur remained about them, their footmen and their chariots and their horsemen, four and thirty days; and all their vessels of water failed all the inhabitants of Bethulia. And the cisterns were emptied, and they had not water to drink their fill for one day: for they gave them drink by measure. And their young children were out of heart, and the women and the young men fainted for thirst, and they fell down in the streets of the city, and in the passages of the gates, and there was no longer any strength in them. And all the people were gathered together against Ozias, and against the rulers of the city, the young men and the women and the children, and they cried with a loud voice, and said before all the elders,

God be judge between you and us: because ye have done us great wrong, in that ye have not spoken words of peace with the children of Asshur. And now we have no helper: but God hath sold us into their hands, that we should be laid low before them with thirst and great destruction. And now call them unto you, and deliver up the whole city for a prey to the people of Holofernes, and to all his host. For it is better for us to be made a spoil unto them: for we shall be servants, and our souls shall live, and we shall not see the death of our babes before our eyes, and our wives and our children fainting in death. We take to witness

¶ JUDITH ¶

against you the heaven and the earth, and our God and the Lord of our fathers, which punisheth us according to our sins and the sins of our fathers, that he do not according as we have said this day.

And there was great weeping of all with one consent in the midst of the assembly ; and they cried unto the Lord God with a loud voice. And Ozias said to them, Brethren, be of good courage, let us yet endure five days, in the which space the Lord our God shall turn his mercy toward us ; for he will not forsake us utterly. But if these days pass, and there come no help unto us, I will do according to your words. And he dispersed the people, every man to his own camp ; and they went away unto the walls and towers of their city ; and he sent the women and children into their houses : and they were brought very low in the city.

JUDITH & CHAPTER VIII

AND IN THOSE DAYS JUDITH HEARD thereof, the daughter of Merari, the son of Ox, the son of Joseph, the son of Oziel, the son of Elkiah, the son of Ananias, the son of Gideon, the son of Raphaim, the son of Ahitub, the son of Elihu, the son of Eliab, the son of Nathanael, the son of Salamiel, the son of Salasadai, the son of Israel. And her husband was Manasses, of her tribe and of her family, and he died in the days of barley harvest. For he stood over them that bound sheaves in the field, and the heat came upon his head, and he fell on his bed, and died in his city Bethulia: and they buried him with his fathers in the field which is between Dothaim and Balamon. And Judith was a widow in her house three years and four months. And she made her a tent upon the roof of her house, and put on sackcloth upon her loins; and the garments of her widowhood were upon her. And she fasted all the days of her widowhood, save the eves of the sabbaths, and the sabbaths, and the eves of the new moons, and the new moons, and the feasts and joyful days of the house of Israel. And she was of a goodly countenance, and exceeding beautiful to behold: and her husband Manasses had left her gold, and silver, and menservants, and maid-servants, and cattle, and lands; and she remained upon them. And there was none that gave her an evil word; for she feared God exceedingly.

And she heard the evil words of the people against the governor, because they fainted for lack of water; and Judith heard all the words that Ozias spake unto them, how he swore to them that he would deliver the city unto the Assyrians after five days. And she sent her maid, that was over all things that she had, to call

Ozias and Chabris and Charmis, the elders of her city.
And they came unto her, and she said unto them,

Hear me now, O ye rulers of the inhabitants of Bethulia: for your word that ye have spoken before the people this day is not right, and ye have set the oath which ye have pronounced between God and you, and have promised to deliver the city to our enemies, unless within these days the Lord turn to help you. And now who are ye that have tempted God this day, and stand instead of God among the children of men? And now try the Lord Almighty, and ye shall never know anything. For ye shall not find the depth of the heart of man, and ye shall not perceive the things that he thinketh: and how shall ye search out God, which hath made all these things, and know his mind, and comprehend his purpose? Nay, my brethren, provoke not the Lord our God to anger. For if he be not minded to help us within these five days, he hath power to defend us in such time as he will, or to destroy us before the face of our enemies. But do not ye pledge the counsels of the Lord our God: for God is not as man, that he should be threatened; neither as the son of man, that he should be turned by intreaty. Wherefore let us wait for the salvation that cometh from him, and call upon him to help us, and he will hear our voice, if it please him. For there arose none in our age, neither is there any of us to-day, tribe, or kindred, or family, or city, which worship gods made with hands, as it was in the former days; for the which cause our fathers were given to the sword, and for a spoil, and fell with a great fall before our enemies. But we know none other god beside him, wherefore we hope that he will not despise us, nor any of our race. For if we be taken so, all Judæa

shall sit upon the ground, and our sanctuary shall be spoiled; and of our blood shall he require the profanation thereof. And the slaughter of our brethren, and the captivity of the land, and the desolation of our inheritance, shall he turn upon our heads among the Gentiles, wheresoever we shall be in bondage; and we shall be an offence and a reproach before them that take us for a possession. For our bondage shall not be ordered to favour: but the Lord our God shall turn it to dishonour. And now, brethren, let us show an example to our brethren, because their soul hangeth upon us, and the sanctuary and the house and the altar rest upon us. Besides all this let us give thanks to the Lord our God, which trieth us, even as he did our fathers also. Remember all the things which he did to Abraham, and all the things in which he tried Isaac, and all the things which happened to Jacob in Mesopotamia of Syria, when he kept the sheep of Laban his mother's brother. For he hath not tried us in the fire, as he did them, to search out their hearts, neither hath he taken vengeance on us; but the Lord doth scourge them that come near unto him, to admonish them.

And Ozias said to her, All that thou hast spoken hast thou spoken with a good heart, and there is none that shall gainsay thy words. For this is not the first day wherein thy wisdom is manifested; but from the beginning of thy days all the people have known thine understanding, because the disposition of thy heart is good. But the people were exceeding thirsty, and compelled us to do as we spake to them, and to bring an oath upon ourselves, which we will not break. And now pray thou for us, because thou art a godly woman, and the Lord shall send us rain to fill our cisterns, and

¶ JUDITH ¶

we shall faint no more. And Judith said unto them, Hear me, and I will do a thing, which shall go down to all generations among the children of our race. Ye shall stand at the gate this night, and I will go forth with my maid: and, within the days after which ye said that ye would deliver the city to our enemies, the Lord shall visit Israel by my hand. But ye shall not inquire of mine act: for I will not declare it unto you, till the things be finished that I do. And Ozias and the rulers said unto her, Go in peace, and the Lord God be before thee, to take vengeance on our enemies. And they returned from the tent, and went to their stations.

JUDITH & CHAPTER IX

BUT JUDITH FELL UPON HER FACE, AND put ashes upon her head, and uncovered the sackcloth wherewith she was clothed; and the incense of that evening was now being offered at Jerusalem in the house of God, and Judith cried unto the Lord with a loud voice, and said,

O Lord God of my father Simeon, into whose hand thou gavest a sword to take vengeance of the strangers, who loosened the girdle of a virgin to defile her, and uncovered the thigh to her shame, and profaned the womb to her reproach; for thou saidst, It shall not be so; and they did so: wherefore thou gavest their rulers to be slain, and their bed,¹ which was ashamed for her that was deceived, to be dyed in blood, and smotest the servants with their lords, and the lords upon their thrones; and gavest their wives for a prey, and their daughters to be captives, and all their spoils to be divided among thy dear children; which were moved with zeal for thee, and abhorred the pollution of their blood, and called upon thee for aid: O God, O my God, hear me also that am a widow. For thou wroughtest the things that were before those things, and those things, and such as ensued after; and thou didst devise the things which are now, and the things which are to come: and the things which thou didst devise came to pass; yea, the things which thou didst determine stood before thee, and said, Lo, we are here: for all thy ways are prepared, and thy judgement is with foreknowledge. For, behold, the Assyrians are multiplied in their power; they are exalted with horse and rider; they have gloried in the² strength of their footmen; they have trusted in shield and spear and bow and sling; and they know not

¹ Some authorities read *which was ashamed for their deceit that they wrought.* ² Gr. arm.

¶ JUDITH ¶

that thou art the Lord that breaketh the battles: the Lord is thy name. Dash thou down their strength in thy power, and bring down their force in thy wrath: for they have purposed to profane thy sanctuary, and to defile the tabernacle where thy glorious name resteth, and to cast down with the sword the horn of thine altar. Look upon their pride, and send thy wrath upon their heads: give into my hand, which am a widow, the might that I have conceived. Smite by the deceit of my lips the servant with the prince, and the prince with his servant: break down their stateliness by the hand of a woman. For thy power standeth not in multitude, nor thy might in strong men: but thou art a God of the afflicted, thou art a helper of the³ oppressed, an upholder of the weak, a protector of the forlorn, a saviour of them that are without hope. Yea, yea, God of my father, and God of the inheritance of Israel, Lord of the heavens and of the earth, Creator of the waters, King⁴ of every creature, hear thou my prayer: and make my speech and deceit to be their wound and stripe, who have purposed hard things against thy covenant, and thy hallowed house, and the top of Sion, and the house of the possession of thy children. And make every nation and tribe of thine to know that thou art God, the God of all power and might, and that there is none other that protecteth the race of Israel but thou.

3 Gr. fewer. 4 Gr. of all thy creation.

AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN SHE HAD ceased to cry unto the God of Israel, and had made an end of all these words, that she rose up where she had fallen down, and called her maid, and went down into the house, in the which she was wont to abide on the sabbath days and on her feast days, and pulled off the sackcloth which she had put on, and put off the garments of her widowhood, and washed her body all over with water, and anointed herself with rich ointment, and braided the hair of her head, and put a tire upon it, and put on her garments of gladness, wherewith she was wont to be clad in the days of the life of Manasses her husband. And she took sandals for her feet, and put her chains about her, and her bracelets, and her rings, and her earrings, and all her ornaments, and decked herself bravely, to beguile the eyes of all men that should see her. And she gave her maid a leathern bottle of wine, and a cruse of oil, and filled a bag with parched corn and lumps of figs and ¹ fine bread; and she packed all her vessels together, and laid them upon her.

And they went forth to the gate of the city of Bethulia, and found standing thereby Ozias, and the elders of the city, Chabris and Charmis. But when they saw her, that her countenance was altered, and her apparel was changed, they wondered at her beauty very exceedingly, and said unto her, The God of our fathers give thee favour, and accomplish thy purposes to the glory of the children of Israel, and to the exaltation of Jerusalem. And she worshipped God, and said unto them, Command that they open unto me the gate of the city, and I will go forth to accomplish the things whereof ye spake with

¹ Gr. *pure*

me. And they commanded the young men to open unto her, as she had spoken ; and they did so.

And Judith went out, she, and her handmaid with her ; and the men of the city looked after her, until she was gone down the mountain, until she had passed the valley, and they could see her no more. And they went straight onward in the valley : and the watch of the Assyrians met her ; and they took her, and asked her, Of what people art thou ? and whence comest thou ? and whither goest thou ? And she said, I am a daughter of the Hebrews, and I flee away from their presence ; because they are about to be given you to be consumed : and I am coming into the presence of Holofernes the chief captain of your host, to declare words of truth ; and I will shew before him a way, whereby he shall go, and win all the hill country, and there shall not be lacking of his men one person, nor one life. Now when the men heard her words, and considered her countenance, the beauty thereof was exceeding marvellous in their eyes, and they said unto her, Thou hast saved thy life, in that thou hast hasted to come down to the presence of our lord : and now come to his tent, and some of us shall conduct thee, until they shall deliver thee into his hands. But ²when thou standest before him, be not afraid in thine heart, but declare unto him according to thy words ; and he shall entreat thee well. And they chose out of them a hundred men, and appointed them to accompany her and her maid ; and they brought them to the tent of Holofernes.

And there was a concourse throughout all the camp, for her coming was noised among the tents ; and they came and compassed her about, as she stood without

² Gr. *if.*



JUDITH BEFORE HOLOFERNES

¶ JUDITH ¶

the tent of Holofernes, until they told him of her. And they marvelled at her beauty, and marvelled at the children of Israel because of her, and each one said to his neighbour, Who shall despise this people, that have among them such women? for it is not good that one man of them be left, seeing that, if they are let go, they shall be able to deceive the whole earth. And they that lay near Holofernes, and all his servants, went forth and brought her into the tent. And Holofernes was resting upon his bed under the canopy, which was woven with purple and gold and emeralds and precious stones. And they told him of her; and he came forth into the space before his tent, with silver lamps going before him. But when Judith was come before him and his servants, they all marvelled at the beauty of her countenance; and she fell down upon her face, and did reverence unto him: and his servants raised her up.

AND HOLOFERNES SAID UNTO HER, Woman, be of good comfort, fear not in thy heart: for I never hurt any that hath chosen to serve Nebuchadnezzar, the king of all the earth. And now, if thy people that dwelleth in the hill country had not set light by me, I would not have lifted up my spear against them: but they have done these things to themselves. And now tell me wherefore thou didst flee from them, and camest unto us: for thou art come to save thyself; be of good comfort, thou shalt live this night, and hereafter: for there is none that shall wrong thee, but all shall entreat thee well, as is done unto the servants of king Nebuchadnezzar my lord. And Judith said unto him,

Receive the words of thy servant, and let thy handmaid speak in thy presence, and I will declare no lie unto my lord this night. And if thou shalt follow the words of thy handmaid, God shall bring the thing to pass perfectly with thee; and my lord shall not fail of his purposes. As Nebuchadnezzar king of all the earth liveth, and as his power liveth, who hath sent thee for the preservation of every living thing, not only do men serve him by thee, but also the beasts of the field and the cattle and the birds of the heaven shall live through thy strength, in the time of Nebuchadnezzar and of all his house. For we have heard of thy wisdom and the subtil devices of thy soul, and it hath been reported in all the earth, that thou only art brave in all the kingdom, and mighty in knowledge, and wonderful in feats of war. And now as concerning the matter, which Achior did speak in thy council, we have heard his words: for the men of Bethulia saved him, and he declared unto them all that he had spoken before thee. Wherefore,

* JUDITH *

O lord and master, neglect not his word ; but lay it up in thy heart, for it is true : for our race shall not be punished, neither shall the sword prevail against them, except they sin against their God. And now, that my lord be not defeated and frustrate of his purpose, and that death may fall upon them, their sin hath overtaken them, wherewith they shall provoke their God to anger, whosoever they shall do wickedness. Since their victuals failed them, and all their water was scant, they took counsel to lay hands upon their cattle, and determined to consume all those things, which God charged them by his laws that they should not eat: and they are resolved to spend the firstfruits of the corn, and the tenths of the wine and the oil, which they had sanctified, and reserved for the priests that stand before the face of our God in Jerusalem ; the which things it is not fitting for any of the people so much as to touch with their hands. And they have sent some to Jerusalem, because they also that dwell there have done this thing, to bring them a licence from the senate. And it shall be, when one shall bring them word, and they shall do it, they shall be given thee to be destroyed the same day. Wherefore I thy servant, knowing all this, fled away from their presence ; and God sent me to work things with thee, whereat all the earth shall be astonished, even as many as shall hear it. For thy servant is religious, and serveth the God of heaven day and night : and now, my lord, I will abide with thee, and thy servant will go forth by night into the valley, and I will pray unto God, and he shall tell me when they have committed their sins : and I will come and shew it also unto thee ; and thou shalt go forth with all thy host, and there shall be none of them that shall resist thee.

And I will lead thee through the midst of Judæa, until thou comest over against Jerusalem ; and I will set thy seat in the midst thereof ; and thou shalt drive them as sheep that have no shepherd, and a dog shall not so much as open his mouth before thee : for these things were told me according to my foreknowledge, and were declared unto me, and I was sent to tell thee.

And her words were pleasing in the sight of Holofernes and of all his servants ; and they marvelled at her wisdom, and said, There is not such a woman from one end of the earth to the other, for beauty of face, and wisdom of words. And Holofernes said unto her, God did well to send thee before the people, that might should be in our hands, and destruction among them that lightly regarded my lord. And now thou art beautiful in thy countenance, and witty in thy words : for if thou shalt do as thou hast spoken, thy God shall be my God, and thou shalt dwell in the house of king Nebuchadnezzar, and shalt be renowned through the whole earth.

AND HE COMMANDED TO BRING HER IN where his silver vessels were set, and bade that they should prepare for her of his own meats, and that she should drink of his own wine. And Judith said, I will not eat thereof, lest there be an occasion of stumbling: but provision shall be made for me of the things that are come with me. And Holofernes said unto her, But if the things that be with thee should fail, whence shall we be able to give thee the like? for there is none of thy race with us. And Judith said unto him, As thy soul liveth, my lord, thy servant shall not spend those things that be with me, until the Lord work by my hand the things that he hath determined. And the servants of Holofernes brought her into the tent, and she slept till midnight, and she rose up toward the morning watch, and sent to Holofernes, saying, Let my lord now command that they suffer thy servant to go forth unto prayer. And Holofernes commanded his guards that they should not stay her: and she abode in the camp three days, and went out every night into the valley of Bethulia, and washed herself at the fountain of water in the camp. And when she came up, she besought the Lord God of Israel to direct her way to the raising up of the children of his people. And she came in clean, and remained in the tent, until she took her meat toward evening.

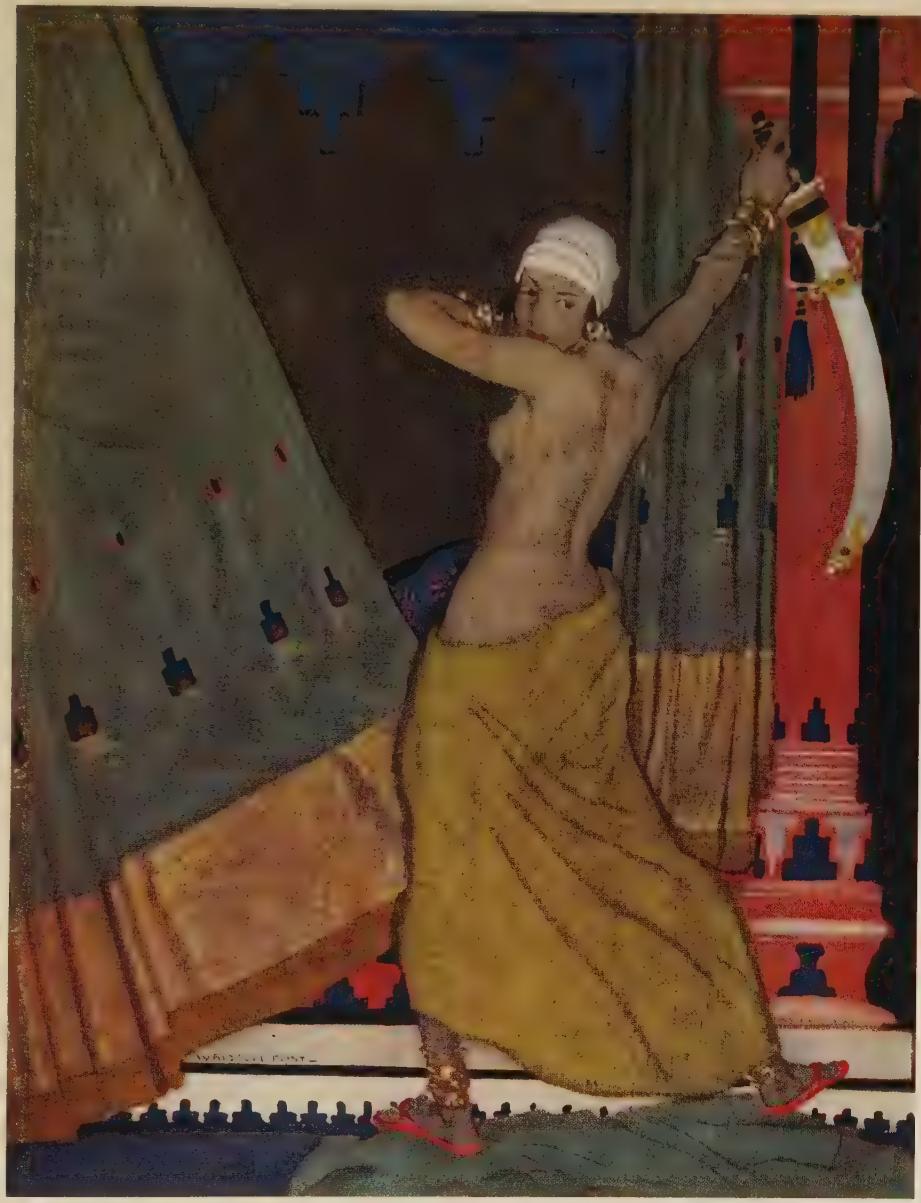
And it came to pass on the fourth day, Holofernes made a feast to his own servants only, and called none of the officers to the banquet. And he said to Bagoas the eunuch, who had charge over all that he had, Go now, and persuade this Hebrew woman which is with thee, that she come unto us, and eat and drink with us. For, lo, it is a shame for our person, if we shall let such

a woman go, not having had her company; for if we draw her not unto us, she shall laugh us to scorn. And Bagoas went from the presence of Holofernes, and came into her, and said, Let not this fair damsel fear to come to my lord, and to be honoured in his presence, and to drink wine and be merry with us, and to be made this day as one of the daughters of the children of Asshur, which wait in the house of Nebuchadnezzar. And Judith said unto him, And who am I, that I should gainsay my lord? for whatsoever shall be pleasing in his eyes I will do speedily, and this shall be my joy unto the day of my death. And she arose, and decked herself with her apparel and all her woman's attire; and her servant went and laid fleeces on the ground for her over against Holofernes, which she had received of Bagoas for her daily use, that she might sit and eat upon them. And Judith came in and sat down, and Holofernes' heart was ravished with her, and his soul was moved, and he desired exceedingly her company: and he was watching for a time to deceive her, from the day that he had seen her. And Holofernes said unto her, Drink now, and be merry with us. And Judith said, I will drink now, my lord, because my life is magnified in me this day more than all the days since I was born. And she took and ate and drank before him what her servant had prepared. And Holofernes took great delight in her, and drank exceeding much wine, more than he had drunk at any time in one day since he was born.

BUT WHEN THE EVENING WAS COME, HIS servants made haste to depart, and Bagoas shut the tent without, and dismissed them that waited from the presence of his lord; and they went away to their beds: for they were all weary, because the feast had been long. But Judith was left alone in the tent, and Holofernes lying along upon his bed: for he was overflowed with wine. And Judith had said to her servant that she should stand without her bedchamber, and wait for her coming forth, as she did daily: for she said she would go forth to her prayer; and she spake to Bagoas according to the same words. And all went away from her presence, and none was left in the bedchamber, neither small nor great. And Judith, standing by his bed, said in her heart, O Lord God of all power, look in this hour upon the works of my hands for the exaltation of Jerusalem. For now is the time to help thine inheritance, and to do the thing that I have purposed to the destruction of the enemies which are risen up against us. And she came to the rail of the bed, which was at Holofernes' head, and took down his scimitar from thence; and she drew near unto the bed, and took hold of the hair of his head, and said, Strengthen me, O Lord God of Israel, this day. And she smote twice upon his neck with all her might, and took away his head from him, and tumbled his body down from the bed, and took down the canopy from the pillars; and after a little while she went forth, and gave Holofernes' head to her maid; and she put it in her bag of victuals: and they twain went forth together unto prayer, according to their custom: and they passed through the camp, and compassed that valley, and went up to the mountain of Bethulia, and came to the gates thereof.

¶ JUDITH ¶

And Judith said afar off to the watchmen at the gates, Open, open now the gate: God is with us, even our God, to shew his power yet in Israel, and his might against the enemy, as he hath done even this day. And it came to pass, when the men of her city heard her voice, they made haste to go down to the gate of their city, and they called together the elders of the city. And they ran all together, both small and great, for it was strange unto them that she was come: and they opened the gate, and received them, making a fire to give light, and compassed them round about. And she said to them with a loud voice, Praise God, praise him: praise God, who hath not taken away his mercy from the house of Israel, but hath destroyed our enemies by my hand this night. And she took forth the head out of the bag, and shewed it, and said unto them, Behold, the head of Holofernes, the chief captain of the host of Asshur, and behold, the canopy, wherein he did lie in his drunkenness; and the Lord smote him by the hand of a woman. And as the Lord liveth, who preserved me in my way that I went, my countenance deceived him to his destruction, and he did not commit sin with me, to defile and shame me. And all the people were exceedingly amazed, and bowed themselves, and worshipped God, and said with one accord, Blessed art thou, O our God, which hast this day brought to nought the enemies of thy people. And Ozias said unto her, Blessed art thou, daughter, in the sight of the most High God, above all the women upon the earth; and blessed is the Lord God, who created the heavens and the earth, who directed thee to the smiting of the head of the prince of our enemies. For thy hope shall not depart from the heart of men that remember the strength of



JUDITH REACHES FOR THE SCIMITAR

¶ JUDITH ¶

God for ever. And God turn these things to thee for a perpetual praise, to visit thee with good things, because thou didst not spare thy life by reason of the affliction of our race, but didst avenge our fall, walking a straight way before our God. And all the people said, So be it, so be it.

AND JUDITH SAID UNTO THEM, HEAR ME now, my brethren, and take this head, and hang it upon the battlement of your wall. And it shall be, so soon as the morning shall appear, and the sun shall come forth upon the earth, ye shall take up every one his weapons of war, and go forth every valiant man of you out of the city, and ye shall set a captain over them, as though ye would go down to the plain toward the watch of the children of Asshur; and ye shall not go down. And these shall take up their panoplies, and shall go into their camp, and rouse up the captains of the host of Asshur, and they shall run together to the tent of Holofernes, and they shall not find him: and fear shall fall upon them, and they shall flee before your face. And ye, and all that inhabit every coast of Israel, shall pursue them, and overthrow them as they go. But before ye do these things, call me Achior the Ammonite, that he may see and know him that despised the house of Israel, and that sent him to us, as it were to death.

And they called Achior out of the house of Ozias; but when he came, and saw the head of Holofernes in a man's hand in the assembly of the people, he fell upon his face, and his spirit failed. But when¹ they had recovered him, he fell at Judith's feet, and did reverence unto her, and said, Blessed art thou in every tent of Judah, and in every nation, which hearing thy name shall be troubled. And now tell me all the things that thou hast done in these days. And Judith declared unto him in the midst of the people all the things that she had done, from the day that she went forth until the time that she spake unto them. But when she left

¹ Many authorities read he had recovered himself.

¶ JUDITH ¶

off speaking, the people shouted with a loud voice, and made a joyful noise in their city. But when Achior saw all the things that the God of Israel had done, he believed in God exceedingly, and circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, and was joined unto the house of Israel, unto this day.

But as soon as the morning arose, they hanged the head of Holofernes upon the wall, and every man took up his weapons, and they went forth by bands unto the ascents of the mountain. But when the children of Asshur saw them, they sent hither and thither to their leaders; but they went to their captains and tribunes, and to every one of their rulers. And they came to Holofernes' tent, and said to him that was over all that he had, Waken now our lord: for the slaves have been bold to come down against us to battle, that they may be utterly destroyed. And Bagoas went in, and knocked at the outer door of the tent; for he supposed that he was sleeping with Judith. But when none hearkened to him, he opened it, and went into the bedchamber, and found him cast upon the threshold dead, and his head had been taken from him. And he cried with a loud voice, with weeping and groaning and a mighty cry, and rent his garments. And he entered into the tent where Judith lodged: and he found her not, and he leaped out to the people, and cried aloud, The slaves have dealt treacherously: one woman of the Hebrews hath brought shame upon the house of king Nebuchadnezzar; for, behold, Holofernes lieth upon the ground, and his head is not on him. But when the rulers of the host of Asshur heard the words, they rent their coats, and their soul was troubled exceedingly, and there was a cry and an exceeding great noise in the midst of the camp.

AND WHEN THEY THAT WERE IN THE tents heard, they were amazed at the thing that was come to pass. And trembling and fear fell upon them, and no man durst abide any more in the sight of his neighbour, but rushing out with one accord, they fled into every way of the plain and of the hill country. And they that had encamped in the hill country round about Bethulia fled away. And then the children of Israel, every one that was a warrior among them, rushed out upon them. And Ozias sent to Betomasthaim, and Bebai, and Chobai, and Chola, and to every coast of Israel, such as should tell concerning the things that had been accomplished, and that all should rush forth upon their enemies to destroy them. But when the children of Israel heard, they all fell upon them with one accord, and smote them unto Chobai: yea, and in like manner also they of Jerusalem and of all the hill country came (for men had told them what things were come to pass in the camp of their enemies), and they that were in Gilead and in Galilee fell upon their flank with a great slaughter, until they were past Damascus and the borders thereof. But the residue, that dwelt at Bethulia, fell upon the camp of Asshur, and spoiled them, and were enriched exceedingly. But the children of Israel returned from the slaughter, and gat possession of that which remained; and the villages and the cities, that were in the hill country and in the plain country, took many spoils: for there was an exceeding great store.

And Joakim the high priest, and the senate of the children of Israel that dwelt in Jerusalem, came to behold the good things which the Lord had shewed to Israel, and to see Judith, and to salute her. But when



JUDITH RETURNS TO BETHULIA

¶ JUDITH ¶

they came unto her, they all blessed her with one accord, and said unto her, Thou art the exaltation of Jerusalem, thou art the great glory of Israel, thou art the great rejoicing of our race: thou hast done all these things by thy hand: thou hast done with Israel the things that are good, and God is pleased therewith; blessed be thou with the Almighty Lord for evermore. And all the people said, So be it. And the people spoiled the camp for the space of thirty days: and they gave unto Judith Holofernes' tent, and all his silver cups, and his beds, and his vessels, and all his furniture: and she took them, and placed them on her mule, and made ready her wagons, and heaped them thereon.

And all the women of Israel ran together to see her; and they blessed her, and made a dance among them for her; and she took ¹ branches in her hand, and gave to the women that were with her. And they made themselves garlands of olive, she and they that were with her, and she went before all the people in the dance, leading all the women: and all the men of Israel followed in their armour with garlands, and with songs in their mouths.

¹ Compare 2 Macc. x. 7.

JUDITH ♫ CHAPTER XVI

AND JUDITH BEGAN TO SING THIS THANKS-giving in all Israel, and all the people sang with loud voices this song of praise. And Judith said,

Begin unto my God with timbrels,
Sing unto my Lord with cymbals :
Tune unto him psalm and praise :
Exalt him, and call upon his name.
For the Lord is the God that breaketh the battles :
For in his armies in the midst of the people
He delivered me out of the hand of them that persecuted me.

Asshur came out of the mountains from the north,
He came with ten thousands of his host,
The multitude whereof stopped the torrents,
And their horsemen covered the hills.

He said that he would burn up my borders,
And kill my young men with the sword,
And throw my sucking children to the ground,
And give mine infants for a prey,
And make my virgins a spoil.

The Almighty Lord brought them to nought by the hand of a woman.

For their mighty one did not fall by young men,
Neither did sons of the Titans smite him,
Nor did high giants set upon him :

But Judith the daughter of Merari made him weak with the beauty of her countenance.

For she put off the apparel of her widowhood
For the exaltation of those that were distressed in Israel,
She anointed her face with ointment,
And bound her hair in a tire,
And took a linen garment to deceive him.

¶ JUDITH ¶

Her sandal ravished his eye,
And her beauty took his soul prisoner :
The scimitar passed through his neck.
The Persians quaked at her daring,
And the Medes were daunted at her boldness.
Then my lowly ones shouted aloud,
And my weak ones were terrified and crouched for
fear :
They lifted up their voice, and they were turned to
flight.
The sons of damsels pierced them through,
And wounded them as runagates' children ;
They perished by the battle of my Lord.
I will sing unto my God a new song :
O Lord, thou art great and glorious,
Marvellous in strength, invincible.
Let all thy creation serve thee :
For thou spakest, and they were made,
Thou didst send forth thy spirit, and it builded them,
And there is none that shall resist thy voice.
For the mountains shall be moved from their founda-
tions with the waters,
And the rocks shall melt as wax at thy presence :
But thou art yet merciful to them that fear thee.
For all sacrifice is little for a sweet savour,
And all the fat is very little for a whole burnt offering
to thee :
But he that feareth the Lord is great continually.
Woe to the nations that rise up against my race :
The Lord Almighty will take vengeance of them in the
day of judgement,
To put fire and worms in their flesh ;
And they shall weep and feel their pain for ever.

• JUDITH •

Now when they came to Jerusalem, they worshipped God; and when the people were purified, they offered their whole burnt offerings, and their freewill offerings, and their gifts. And Judith dedicated all the stuff of Holofernes, which the people had given her, and gave the canopy, which she had taken for herself out of his bedchamber, for a gift unto the Lord. And the people continued feasting in Jerusalem before the sanctuary for the space of three months, and Judith remained with them. But after these days every one departed to his own inheritance, and Judith went away to Bethulia, and remained in her own possession, and was honourable in her time in all the land. And many desired her, and no man knew her all the days of her life, from the day that Manasses her husband died and was gathered to his people. And she increased in greatness exceedingly; and she waxed old in her husband's house, unto a hundred and five years, and let her maid go free: and she died in Bethulia; and they buried her in the cave of her husband Manasses. And the house of Israel mourned for her seven days: and she distributed her goods before she died to all them that were nearest of kin to Manasses her husband, and to them that were nearest of her own kindred. And there was none that made the children of Israel any more afraid in the days of Judith, nor a long time after her death.

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